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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIRKUK 000125

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TAGS: PGOV PHUM PINR PINS PNAT PREF PREL KDEM IZ
SUBJECT: (C) PUK CHANGES; KIRKUK MUST JOIN KDP; IRAN NO ALLY

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CLASSIFIED BY: Tim Uselmann, Political Officer, IPAO, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (a), (d)

¶11. (C) Summary. PUK party leader Noshirwan Mustafa informed IPAO on July 1 in Sulaymaniyah that the PUK had undertaken major reforms, including the re-election of all PUK leaders, beginning with the villages, districts, and sub-districts. Also, he said the Article 140 referendum was necessary to the KRG's strategic position for protecting Sulaymaniyah and Erbil from insurgents. Finally, he said the KRG maintained formal relationships with Kurdish cities in Iran, but not with the national Iranian government. This is the second of two cables from this meeting. (REFTEL) End Summary.

(C) Iran - Not a Friend of the Kurds

¶12. (C) The KRG and the Iranian security bureau had "a gentleman's agreement" to prevent internal insurgents from attacking each other's border areas. The PUK also had a formal relationship with leaders from three Iranian Kurdish cities. However, the KRG and the Iranian national government had nothing in common, including differences in language, national goals, ideology, and religion. Mustafa said the Iranians actively worked against Iraq. For example, the Iranians had given safe haven to 600 Sunni members of the Ansar al-Islam terrorist group before returning them to the southern areas of Iraq.

(C) Article 140: Control of Kirkuk Protects KRG

¶13. (C) Mustafa insisted the Kirkuk referendum take place on time in 2007 because the KRG needed the increase in national budget pie that co-opting Kirkuk province brought. The KRG could then spend more on the poverty-stricken IDP areas of Kirkuk, where currently Arabs categorized KRG funding as akin to strategies used by the Jews in Palestine. Controlling Kirkuk was also key to the KRG's strategic position for

protecting Sulaymaniyah and Erbil from insurgents. The KRG could take over the management and protection of sensitive sectors, including the oil facilities and pipelines.

(SBU) Changes Within the PUK

¶4. (SBU) The two-month process of re-electing PUK leaders in villages, districts, and sub-districts of Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah and Erbil, began July 1st. Mustafa said the bottom-up shake-up of party leadership was intended to invigorate the party, diversify the leadership with younger members, and redistribute power horizontally by ending the Central Committee and Politburo's monopoly on decision-making.

¶5. (SBU) Mustafa said the minimum age to run for election to the party leadership was lowered from 30 to 16 years old. Minimum membership was also lowered from 15 years to 6 months and the requirement for a university degree was eliminated. They hoped more women would run for office however it was difficult at the village level. In theory, each central organization (district) would have one woman.

¶6. (C) The PUK also adopted Mustafa's initiative to establish a bureau of inquiry to combat corruption within the party. The bureau could investigate any member or rumor and had free reign to ask about any

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matter. It was not meant to address historical crimes, but corruption - e.g. to examine the source of new wealth. The internal committee would include three members: a judge, a financial manager, and a member of the PUK leadership. The bureau could revoke party membership and decisions could not be appealed.

(C) COMMENT:

¶7. (C) Mustafa's effort to distance the KRG from the Iranian government comes after a local paper leaked a secret meeting between the Iranian Intelligence and the PUK and KDP politburos. Many of the changes in the PUK are Mustafa's, particularly those that fight corruption and attempt to include a younger audience. He is a strong advocate for party adaptation to the new Iraq for the sake of survival and an important PUK supporter of KRG Prime Minister Barzani. End Comment.
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